

Ten Questions with...

Fire Chief Kevin Nord

By JOSH CUTLER

Kevin Nord has served as Duxbury's fire chief since September of 2004. Previously he worked for 26 years in the Kingston Fire Department, the last six as a captain.

1) Do you actually get calls to rescue cats in trees? To this day we still get calls for animal related issues; skunks in basement, raccoons in chimney, yes even the proverbial cat in the tree. Generally we don't do animal rescues. We refer all these people to the animal control officer. You really can't justify the time and resources on something like that. We'll try and explain the philosophy [to callers]. We'll send the captain out to put a person out there; we won't leave them high and dry. The one exception is animal rescues related to water and ice. That's because if we don't do it there is going to be a human going out there and then we'll be rescuing the human, too.



Fire Chief Kevin Nord is in his third year in Duxbury.

2) What is the weirdest call you've ever been on? There's a couple I can't really talk about. In general terms there are some calls that people are horrified by, but later they become comical. Kids stuck in places...we've had people get lodged between the wall and the toilet.

3) How many calls do you get on average? We get 2000 calls a year. It grows by ten percent each year...Last year there were roughly 1200 EMS related calls; those are motor vehicle accidents, falls, spills. The other 800 are fire-based, haz-mat....We also get about 200 false alarms....The busiest month is July; June and January are also busy months.

4) What is your average response time? Unless the crews are tied up on other calls we can respond anywhere in town in 4-6 minutes. The only area we fall short on in that response time is Gurnet Road. We do have arrangements with Marshfield, which does respond to that area so we can try to capture that 4-6 minute response.

5) What should residents know about fire extinguishers? P-A-S-S. It's a simple acronym: Pull, Aim, Squeeze, Sweep. There are pretty much two rules of thumb. Fire extinguishers are made for fires in the very early stages. They are very limited and are based on user knowledge; kind of a first aid device if you will. Make sure to report the fire rather than let it grow as you try to fight it. If anybody has a garage they should definitely have an extinguisher in the garage, and obviously one in the kitchen. They can be one of those small 2.5 pound ones. The majority of accidental fires start in the kitchen.

6) What's the difference between a paramedic and an EMT? If we were to look at it in hours an EMT is 100 hours of training. That's basic first aid. Paramedic is 1,500 hours; that includes a significant amount of invasive techniques. Essentially he is the physician's eyes, ears, and hands in the street. Currently we have eight paramedics and one in school that should be wrapping up next month. Everybody else is an EMT; that is the minimum. I am trying to build up to 12 paramedics.

7) The department switched to 24-hour shifts in the last contract. How has that worked out? I have not seen any negative effects from that at this time. I tend to think

I see potentially better productivity because if someone is gearing up to go home at night they might not get into a project, or some type of training. ... I also feel that I've got the guy here for the entire day. They are better prepared. In busier departments you really need to watch the drain on the physical part of it. Obviously it is a longer period of time to be on duty. You want to watch for fatigue. Right now it hasn't been an issue. From a financial point of view I've seen it decrease the amount of overtime related to recalls because before if they were going off duty at six o'clock and they got an ambulance call at five o'clock I was paying overtime. Before I was paying overtime in the morning and at night. So, because they are here for that 24, I've seen a few thousand savings in that respect.

8) How's the staffing level at Ashdod? It is manned 24/7. We have a two-man crew there and a three-man crew here [on Tremont Street].

9) What should people know about the child car seat program? We have two people who are trained technicians. John Sjostedt runs that program. He does an incredible job. People can basically call here and ask for a car seat safety tech to make an appointment and we are happy to do it.

10) What do you do when you're not at the fire station?

I teach fire related topics for different groups. There's a county training association I'm involved with.... My interests are the beach and my motorcycle. It's a Harley Davidson Road King, fire-fighter's edition — red.